

September 10, 2012

Dear Senator Hune,

My name is Bryan Hill and I'm in my eighth year on the Munising Public School Board. I am writing in hope that Senate Bill 1051 passes into law. I chose not to seek another term on the school board because of the conflict of interest on the Munising School Board at this time. Our seven person board currently consists of three board members that are spouses of teachers, one of the three is a retired teacher and his wife is on the negotiation committee for the MEA, one board member's spouse is a bus driver, one is a retired teacher, and there is one board member and myself with no personal ties to the school district. At this time there is no conflict of interest law against a school board member being a spouse of a member of the school district and being able to vote on pay increases and/or insurance policies. My opinion as well as many from the local public cannot believe this is allowable when these same board members are on their spouses insurance or if they are filing joint taxes, any pay increase becomes personal gain for both the board member and spouse. In the past we have had a very colorful board with differences of opinion but I have never been part of any other kind of board meeting that has acted like our current school board. Even though we have not settled a contract at this time, I will give some examples of what our board is doing for personal gain.

At the May 29th board meeting we discussed capping the insurance based on what our Superintendent recommended in the finance meeting then again at this board meeting. The teachers wanted the 80/20 insurance instead of the cap. During this meeting we had one board member poll the teachers who were sitting in the audience to see what they wanted. He publicly commented this was going to cost him money. In the audience were two teachers that are spouses of two of the board members. The vote came and the board went with the teachers not with our Superintendent's recommendation.

In August the board went with a greater increase to their pay steps in the contract plus a raise, again against the Superintendent and Business Manager's recommendations.

In an August at a special board meeting it was another argument on not signing an agreement the teachers wanted regarding prohibited negotiated items in their contract.

Recently, we had a board member show up to negotiations (who was not on the school negotiation committee) and advocate for the teachers in negotiations with the MEA. When asked who notified her of this meeting, the response was a teacher from the MEA negotiation committee called and asked her to attend.

I believe there are ethics violations along with conflict of interest. I also believe if there was a law in place people would not be permitted to be in this situation.

Thanks,

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